11 The persistence of the Palestinian Question*

Predictions that the Palestinian Question would be resolved have foundered in the last 100 years. Some, like Theodor Herzl, thought that the Palestinians would welcome the civilizing efforts of colonizing Jews and thus the Palestinians would not even become a Question.[1] Others later thought that, had the Palestinians accepted the Zionist colonial conquest of much of their country, legitimated by the 1947 UN Partition Plan, and set up a small state on the remaining land, their Question would have been resolved. Still later, others thought that, had the Arab states absorbed the Palestinian refugee population after 1948, the Question would surely have been resolved then. An impatient and exasperated world breathed a sigh of relief when Yasser Arafat and the Israeli government signed the Oslo agreement in 1993 that transformed Arafat from a Nelson Mandela into a Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, but the Question was still not resolved.[2] Finally, some thought that, if the Arab states would only accept Israel's right to be a Jewish state, that is, a state that has the right to discriminate racially and religiously against its non-Jewish citizens by law and practice (which they did at their Beirut Summit in March 2002), the Palestinian Question would have been resolved. But the Palestinian Question persisted and still persists. A decade after Oslo, it is as intransigent as it was in 1917, when the Balfour Declaration was issued. What, then, makes the Palestinian Question persist in the face of so many expectations and desires that it be resolved?

Anti-Semitism

In the last century and a half, many have tried to explain the persistence of the Jewish question, which has always been entangled with the persistence of anti-Jewish sentiment across Western history.[3] This sentiment, whether based on religious, social, ethnic (geographic and linguistic origins), or racial grounds, clustered together in the nineteenth century in a full-fledged othering ideological edifice that came to be known as anti-Semitism. In the nineteenth century, Karl Marx postulated that the Jewish Question would be resolved alongside human emancipation, which required the ending of the division between humans as

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"egotistical" beings inhabiting civil society and humans as "abstract" citizens in the realm of the state.[4] As such emancipation failed to materialize, twentieth-century authors, with as widely differing views as Sigmund Freud, Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Isaac Deutscher, Abram Leon, and Jean-Paul Sartre, attempted to analyze the basis of this anti-Jewish sentiment across the ages, with most concentrating on the new ideology of anti-Semitism that emerged within the belly of Romantic modernity.[5] Their answers ranged from psycho-sexual explanations to socioeconomic ones. Adorno and Horkheimer argued, in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, that Enlightenment had done away with the dialectic and posited itself as the end of history and then sought to control everything totalistically. In so doing, Jews were posited and projected by anti-Semites as a "negative principle." Thus Enlightenment transformed itself into the nightmare of Nazism and a mediocritizing capitalism.[6] Leon turned to Marxian economics and posited historical Jews as a people-class made necessary by Christian European economics.[7] Freud, among other things, identified the horror felt by Christian boys when they hear of the circumcision of Jewish boys, which they interpret as castration, as one of the reasons for the contempt they feel for Jewish men.[8] Others saw the very basis of gentile identity as necessitating the hatred of the Jew, wherein Sartre's thesis that "if the Jew did not exist the anti-Semite would invent him" tops the list.[9] Notwithstanding Sartre's reduction of the Jew to an object of gentile hatred lacking agency, his important thesis linked the persistence of the Jewish Question to the persistence of anti-Semitism.

The European Renaissance had been predicated on a rejection of the recent European barbarism. This negative assessment of what came to be known later as the Middle Ages motivated Renaissance and, later, Enlightenment thinkers to attempt to invent a heroic, glorious past by appropriating Greek civilization and incorporating it into the recently invented Europe.[10] This process was parallel to Protestantism's appropriation of the Hebrew Bible in ways that the Catholic Church had previously shunned. European colonialism, having learned the lessons of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, was going to impart to all the colonized a similar cultural self-hatred, calling for the adoption of enlightened European Christian culture as model. While colonialism began to rule over peoples and cultures it had othered a priori, Jews living in Europe had experienced this othering for a much longer time, albeit intermittently. The Jewish *Haskala* emerged within this European history of self-rejection and reinvention as an assimilationist project seeking to transform Jewish culture from something identified by post-Enlightened Europe as non-European, if not un-European, into something more in line with the newly invented image of Europe and its Enlightenment. Indeed, Moses Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* was seen by many as an attempt to transform Judaism into a form of Enlightened Christianity, leading many of his critics to call upon him to take the extra step and convert. He did not, but his children did.[11] Reform Judaism, a German innovation, would pick up the mantle of Christianizing Judaism in the middle of the nineteenth century.[12] The rejection of things Jewish in favor of things European were to define much of the *Haskala* project, which saw in assimilation the final integration of an othered

Jewry into the new European self.[13] While the project seemed successful in a number of ways, especially in Germany and France and less so in "unenlightened" Eastern Europe, it ultimately led to official Christianization through formal conversions. Indeed, Herzl himself, a mere three years before launching the Zionist project, which was to serve as a mild corrective to the *Haskala*, had proposed the mass baptism of European Jews to Catholicism in a now famous proposal to the Pope.[14]

Zionism, like the *Haskala*, adopted European, especially German, Enlightenment thought as its evaluative mode of assessing Jewishness and Judaism and sought their transformation into European enlightenment. It was not that the anti-Semites were wrong that Jews had "bold, misshapen noses; furtive and cunning eyes" as Herzl described French Jews, for example,[15] or that they spoke a debased German that was nothing less than "the stealthy tongues of prisoners" as Herzl described in *Der Judenstaat*,[16] but rather that the anti-Semites did not offer a solution to this despicable Jewish condition. Zionism, which espoused these views of Jews while conscious of their anti-Semitic pedigree, simply wanted to rid Jews of such traits and teach them how to be Europeans. While Zionism espoused the goals of the *maskilim* and other Jewish assimilationists in its understanding that the mark of Jewish otherness had to be removed, it differed from both in affirming that the attempt by Jews to prove that they could become Europeans inside Europe would not be allowed by European Christians. The solution seemed self-evident: Zionism, in Herzl's words, would set up a state for the Jews that would constitute "the portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism."[17] This state, as Herzl's novel *Altneuland* uncovered, would outdo the Europeans at their own game of civilization. The settler colony was going to be the space of Jewish transformation. To become European, Jews must exit Europe. They could return to it and become part of it by emulating its culture at a geographical remove. If Jews were Asians in Europe, in Asia, they will become Europeans.[18] Herzl affirms that it is not a question of taking Jews away "from civilized regions into the desert," but rather that the transformation "will be carried out in the midst of civilization. We shall not revert to a lower stage, we shall rise to a higher one."[19] In the new settler colony, Jews would no longer be "dirty," "cunning," "parasitical," "lazy," "superstitious," "weak," "effeminate," as anti-Semitism and Zionism posited them, but would become hardworking, scientifically minded, strong, rational, clean, and civilized—in short, European.[20]

Upon encountering the Palestinian Arabs, Zionism's transformative project expanded. While it sought to metamorphose Jews into Europeans, it set in motion a historical process by which it was to metamorphose Palestinian Arabs into Jews in a displaced geography of anti-Semitism. We will see how the persistence of this anti-Semitic impulse in European Christian thought in the nineteenth century, transmitted to and internalized by Jewish Zionism, will organize much of Zionism's cultural outlook and the political projects attendant to it in the next century.[21] The ultimate project of cultural transformation that Zionism embarked upon, then, was the metamorphosis of the Jew into the anti-Semite, which Zionism understood correctly to be the ultimate proof of its Europeanness.

The Jewish holocaust only served to strengthen this belief by Zionism, which insisted that only those Jews who answered its transformative call in its settler colony escaped the fate that befell Jews who insisted on their diaspora/Jewish condition. Herein lies Zionism's contempt for the diaspora and holocaust victims.[22] But Zionism's project proved to be twofold: in transforming the Jew into the anti-Semite (or into the "anti-Jew," as Israeli clinical psychologist Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi posited),[23] it became necessary to transform the Palestinian Arab into the disappearing European Jew.

Settler-colonialism

In order to transform Jews into Europeans in Asia, Zionism sought to make available to them a battery of professions intermittently denied them during their residence in Europe, namely in the fields of agriculture and soldiery, thus making them productive laborers and manly conquering "sabras" in one sweep.[24] What would afford them these opportunities was an Asiatic land "reclaimed" by Zionism as the inheritance of modern Jews from what it posited as their "Hebrew forefathers." Excavating the Hebrew past in order to serve as the basis for the Jews' future would become a central task of the Zionist project.[25] Zionism understood well that, for Jews to become European, they could not remain identified in tribal or religious terms, but rather in terms of race and nationhood. It is in this context that the religious origins of Judaism are transformed into national and racial origins, and ancient Hebrew kings become the progenitors of modern Jews. This was carried out at the beginning of the century through Zionist investment in the new science of statistics, which it insisted on incorporating within what was previously known as *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, transforming it into a *jüdische Wissenschaft*. Arthur Ruppin directed the Bureau for Jewish Statistics, set up in Berlin in 1904 to demonstrate scientifically how Jews were a *Volk* and a race.[26] Ruppin was most interested in eugenics and had won a "major prize" for a study on genetics.[27] He would be appointed a decade later as the Zionist Executive's representative in Palestine.[28] According to a recent study by Israeli scholar Sachlav Stoler-Liss, throughout the 1930s, prominent members of the Zionist medical establishment in Palestine advocated "castrating the mentally ill, encouraging reproduction among families 'numbered among the intelligentsia,' limiting the size of 'families of Eastern [Mizrahi] origin,' and 'preventing . . . lives that are lacking in purpose.' "[29] The Israeli newspaper *Ha'Aretz* marveled that "these proposals are not from some program of the Third Reich but rather were brought up by key figures in the Zionist establishment of the Land of Israel during the period of the British Mandate."[30] These ideas would continue to guide the Zionist movement all the way to the present, manifesting most clearly in its desperate contemporary search for Jewish "genetic markers."[31]

The European nationalist principles of *blut und boden* would guide Zionism's invention of Jews as a nation with its own land. To bring this about, the first item on their agenda was to colonize and settle such land. This "nahalat avot," or the land of the forefathers, the Jewish settlers were going to transform from

a "desolate" and "neglected" Asiatic desert into a blooming, green European terrain full of forests and trees—a persistent point of pride for Israeli Jews. Not only did Herzl's futurist novel *Altneuland* serve as a fantastical blueprint for this effort, but also the very image of the Jew as carrier of European gentile civilization to a barbaric geography was definitional of Zionist political argumentation. Thus in 1930, Chaim Weizmann articulated the project thus: "We wish to spare the Arabs as much as we can of the sufferings which every backward race has gone through on the coming of another, more advanced nation."[32] As the Palestinians decided to resist this *mission civilisatrice*, Weizmann, who was to become Israel's first president, characterized the tasks before Zionism in quashing such resistance as follows: "On one side, the forces of destruction, the forces of the desert, have arisen, and on the other side stand firm the forces of civilization and building. It is the old war of the desert against civilization, but we will not be stopped."[33] Indeed they were not. They went on to destroy much of Palestinian society and expel the majority of its population. Much anxiety, however, remained constitutive of Zionism regarding the remaining signifying traces of the Palestinians and the purported traces of the Hebrews that Zionism insisted could be excavated. Thus Moshe Dayan's now famous words about what befell Palestinian towns tell us not only about the destruction of the non-Jewish past of Palestine, but also about the production of a Jewish past that Zionism collapsed into Hebrewness. His words bear repeating:

> Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You don't even know the names of these Arab villages, and I don't blame you, because these geography books no longer exist. Not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahalal arose in the place of Mahlul, Gvat in the place of Jibta, Sarid in the place of Haneifa, and Kfar-Yehoshua in the place of Tel-Shaman. There is not one single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population.[34]

This palimpsestic operation was not at all arbitrary, but rather was well planned from the beginning of colonization with the establishment of the Jewish National Fund's "Place-Names Committee," which was itself renamed, after 1948, the "Israel Place-Names Committee."[35] Zionist renaming continued unabated upon Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.[36] The new names persisted after the Oslo agreement. Thus, the West Bank still carries its excavated Zionist names, Judea and Samaria, names that are used in government and journalistic parlance, by Likud and by Labor leaders and followers alike.

Not only have the new excavated names persisted, but also the very colonial project that was the originary driving force of Zionism has not abated either. Since 1948, Zionist colonial settlement has transformed Palestine's terrain by erecting new towns and cities on the ruins and traces of Palestinian lives. European Jewish colonists inhabited those Palestinian spaces that they did not destroy by converting them into European Jewish locales. As cited earlier, in his

discussion of the early colonization efforts of holocaust survivors upon arriving in Palestine, Israeli historian Tom Segev's words also bear repeating:

> The War of Independence broke out, and tens of thousands of homes were suddenly available… Hundreds of thousands of Arabs fled, and were expelled from their homes. Entire cities and hundreds of villages left empty were repopulated in a short order with new immigrants. In April 1949, they numbered 100,000, most of them Holocaust survivors. The moment was a dramatic one in the war for Israel, and a frightfully banal one, too, focused as it was on the struggle over houses and furniture. Free people—Arabs—had gone into exile and become destitute refugees; destitute refugees—Jews—took the exiles' places as a first step in their new lives as free people. One group lost all they had, while the other found everything they needed—tables, chairs, closets, pots, pans, plates, sometimes clothes, family albums, books, radios, and pets. Most of the immigrants broke into the abandoned Arab houses without direction, without order, without permission. For a few months the country was caught up in a frenzy of take-what-you-can, first-come, first-served. Afterwards the authorities tried to halt the looting and take control of the allocation of houses, but in general they came too late. Immigrants also took possession of Arab stores and workshops, and some Arab neighborhoods soon looked like Jewish towns in pre-war Europe, with tailors, shoemakers, dry-goods merchants—all the traditional Jewish occupations.[37]

Zionism would further transform these towns into purely European locales with a Hebrew flavor, which it conflated with the new Jewish identity. Not only did Zionism reappropriate the secular and religious history of the Hebrews from a European Protestantism intent on appropriating the Hebrews' religious philosophy, it also adopted as its own, Europe's suspect Greek heritage, on account of its European civilizational commitments. In this spirit, the schismatic divide between Jewish and Christian ethics was unified after the Second World War as the so-called Judeo-Christian ethical legacy common to all the civilized.[38] The Palestinian Question persisted throughout Zionism's pre-State history as the national question, as well as the land question. Israel's establishment in 1948 set in motion an uninterrupted process of colonization, with its 1967 conquest of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip marking an intensified effort that was given an even stronger push since the Oslo agreement was signed, as the number of Jewish colonial settlers in the still-occupied territories have doubled since 1993. But as Zionism's colonization continues, so does Palestinian resistance. The Palestinian Question, therefore, persists as long as Zionism's colonial venture persists.

Racism

As Zionism was metamorphosing Palestine into the land of the ancient Hebrews, which would then be repackaged as the land of modern and future Jews, Zionism

also set its cultural production in motion. Zionism's objective was to ensure Israel's Europeanness and its non-Asianness, or, in Zionist parlance, its non-"levantineness." The possible levantinization of Zionism's new Asian-turned-European geography was blamed not solely on the persistence of Palestinian traces and bodies within the newly declared Euro-Jewish space, but more terrifyingly on Zionism's abduction of Arab Jews into the heart of its project. The anxiety that the Arab Jews caused, as Ella Shohat has demonstrated,[39] was as great as that caused by the Palestinians, added to which were the "hordes" of Arabs surrounding this new oasis of European culture—what Israeli Jews call today their "tough neighborhood."[40] This, however, never stopped Zionism from appropriating the fruit of the land that Palestine's peasants produced. It is in this vein that Zionism appropriated Palestinian and pan-Syrian food like hummus, falafil, tabbulah, *maftul* (increasingly known in the United States and Europe as "Israeli couscous"), and finely diced Palestinian rural salad (now known in New York delis as "Israeli salad") as its own national dishes.

Palestinians have figured in different, albeit related, ways to the chain of Zionist ideologues from Herzl to Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon. While Herzl saw them as a "dirty" people who looked like "brigands,"[41] Menachem Begin was to see them as "two-legged beasts."[42] Note the complete congruence between anti-Semitic adjectives used against European Jews and their adoption by Zionism to describe the Palestinians. While Herzl sought to "transfer the penniless population" to the surrounding countries, Ben-Gurion and the Zionist leadership carried out that task successfully in 1948 when they expelled the majority of the Palestinian population, and less successfully in 1967 when they expelled only a few hundred thousands. The tolerance of Israeli Jews of "dirty foreigners" among them has its limits. According to the Israel Institute for Democracy, in a report it released in February 2004:

> As of 2003, more than half (53%) of the Jews in Israel state out loud that they are against full equality for the Arabs; 77% say there should be a Jewish majority on crucial political decisions . . . and the majority (57%) think that the Arabs should be encouraged to emigrate,

a veiled reference to expulsion or "transfer."[43] This is a key practice in Zionism's program of transforming the Palestinian into the Jew. Through the mechanism of expulsion, the land-based Palestinian is metamorphosed overnight into the landless wandering diaspora Jew for whom Zionism has only contempt. While the adoption of anti-Semitic epistemology in viewing the Palestinians organized Zionism's overall encounter with this mostly peasant population, physical expulsion became the principal instrument at the disposal of Zionism and Israel to effect this metamorphosis.

But despite Zionism's efforts, it was unable to expel all Palestinians. It transformed those who remained inside Israel into foreigners in their own land and, from 1948 until 1966, subjected them to life under a military, racialist system of rule that was reminiscent of the life of European Jews under the worst types of

anti-Semitic rule[44]—here the 1956 massacre of Kafr Qasim, in which forty-seven Palestinian Israeli citizens (all of them unarmed civilians) were gunned down by Israeli soldiers is not unlike many of the pogroms to which European Jews fell victim.[45] Since 1966, this population has lived under a civilian, racialist system of rule reminiscent of the less extreme experiences of European Jews living under anti-Semitic discriminatory laws.[46] As for the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza, whom Israel captured in 1967, it transformed their lands and homes into besieged ghettoes, walled in and surrounded by mobs of Jewish colonial settlers and the Israeli army. If anti-Semitic Jews could make the Palestinian "desert" bloom, evidence of Palestinian agriculture had to be erased. To this end Jewish Israel has undertaken the desertification of Palestinian lands. The Israeli military's and Jewish settlers' uprooting of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian olive trees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as the Israeli military's recent razing of four million square meters of cultivated land are engineered, among other things, to prove that Palestinians would only be allowed to live in a desert.[47] Only anti-Semitic Jews can live in a European simulacrum of green hills and meadows. The Judaized Palestinian will live in the desert, if allowed to live at all.

Israel was able to replicate the different conditions under which European Jews suffered under extreme anti-Semitic conditions by imposing similar conditions on the different sectors of the Palestinian people, with one important twist: Jews are now the anti-Semitic enforcers of oppression against a recently Judaized population. Indeed, the expelled Palestinians have experienced a life uncannily similar to that of Jews in Europe of the nineteenth and part of the twentieth century. In those countries where Palestinians are granted equal legal rights, as in Jordan, they face unofficial discrimination at every level of government, with political campaigns by extremists calling for their expulsion or "repatriation"—a term not lost on those who know the history of anti-Semitic campaigns to expel Jews from Europe.[48] In those countries that refused to grant them equal rights, such as Lebanon, they have been languishing in refugee camps for fifty-seven years with no rights and constant police harassment and militarized campaigns to massacre them and "repatriate" them.[49] Even those diaspora Palestinians seeking assimilation in their new homes are prevented from doing so on a regular basis in much of the diaspora. The transformation of Palestinians into Jews is located precisely in these parallels. The fact that the anti-Semitic epithet "dirty Jew" has metamorphosed into the favorite Israeli Jewish insult against Palestinians, namely "dirty Arabs" or " 'Aravim milukhlakhim," encapsulates this process perfectly.

But turning Palestinians into Jews does not mean that they can have access to their own Palestinian Hebrew ancestors. On the contrary, it is precisely through Zionism's appropriation of the history of the Palestinian Hebrews as the ancestors of the European-Jews-turned-anti-Semites that the Palestinian Arabs lose any connection to their Hebrew ancestry. While neighboring Egyptians, Jordanians, Lebanese, and Iraqis can narrate a national history that extends to the Pharaohs, the Nabateans, the Phoenicians, and the Babylonians, Palestinians cannot lay any national claims to Palestine's past. As recent converts to landless Jewishness, they cannot access the past of a land colonized by anti-Semitic Hebraic Jews, nor can

they claim ancestors uncovered by Zionism to be the Jews' own exclusive progenitors. This is not so unlike the process through which the Hebrew prophets were abducted from the Jewish tradition into Christianity. It is, however, ironic, and particularly scandalous for Zionism, in this regard to find that a young David Ben-Gurion had postulated in 1918 that it was indeed the Palestinian peasants who were the descendants of the Jews who had remained in Palestine, and that, despite the Islamic conquest, these peasants had held on to their Hebrew ancestors' traditions, most obviously through maintaining the same names for their villages.[50] Ben-Gurion went so far as to assert that

> in spite of much intermixing, the majority of the [Palestinian] fellahin in Western Palestine are unified in their external appearance and in their origin, and in their veins, without a doubt, flows much Jewish blood—from the Jewish peasants who in the days of the persecutions and terrible oppression had renounced their tradition and their people in order to maintain their attachment and loyalty to the land of the Jews.[51]

Ben-Gurion's early and now forgotten opinion notwithstanding, the constants of Zionist thought persist uninterrupted, from Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* (State of the Jews) to a living and prospering *Medinat Yisrael* (the State of Israel) that hopes to become once and for all *Palästinenser-rein*. Evidently, this Zionist desire for national, racial, and religious purity uncontaminated by an *other* hardly deviates from European anti-Semitic nationalist precedents.

The Europeanness of the state was a clear goal at the outset. Herzl saw the state as adopting German for its language, as well as for the name of its cities. In his novel, he proposed "Neudorf" as one such city name. He rejected Yiddish as the language of the settler colony owing to its being a "ghetto" language and a "miserable stunted jargon."[52] The East European Zionist Hebraists showed a better understanding of Europeanness than the West European Herzl, who sought blind emulation, for they insisted on an ancient language in an ancient land, echoing the European nationalist principles of *Blut und Boden*. While the Hebraists insisted that a new secular Hebrew could better serve as the language of the new redeemed Jews, thus further conflating the ancient Hebrews with modern Jews, they worried about Hebrew pronunciation. In this vein, as we saw earlier, Vladimir Jabotinsky, the founder of revisionist Zionism, insisted in his 1930 essay "The Hebrew accent" that

> there are experts who think that we ought to bring our accent closer to the Arabic accent. But this is a mistake. Although Hebrew and Arabic are Semitic languages, it does not mean that our Fathers spoke in [an] 'Arabic accent.' … We are European and our musical taste is European, the taste of Rubinstein, Mendelssohn, and Bizet."[53]

Expressing his anxiety about Moroccan Jews weakening the cultural metamorphosis of Ashkenazi Jews into Europeans, David Ben-Gurion stated: "We do not

want Israelis to become Arabs. We are in duty bound to fight against the spirit of the Levant, which corrupts individuals and societies, and preserve the authentic Jewish values as they crystallized in the [European] Diaspora."[54] The newspaper *Ha'Aretz* worried in 1949 that some of the Arab Jews were "at an even lower level than what we knew with regard to the former Arabs of Eretz Yisrael."[55] A whole cultural operation of civilizing non-European Jews was devised, however unsuccessfully, to "develop" them.[56]

As Michael Selzer has shown in his classic book *The Aryanization of the Jewish State*, German anti-Semitism started a domino effect that began in Germany and ended in Palestine. If German anti-Semitism saw German Jews as dirty and cunning, medieval, and effeminate, German Jews would project such images on the *Ostjuden*—East European Jews—in much of their descriptions. Now it was the turn of the *Ostjuden* to use such adjectives to describe Arab Jews.[57] While Selzer did not carry his argument further to include the Palestinians, they were to become the ultimate object of such displacement. Within the settler colony, the Jewish population, regardless of ethnic origins, has internalized this anti-Semitic epistemology in describing the Palestinians.

This is not simply a superstructural neurosis that has afflicted Zionism; it is rather the epistemological foundation on which it rests. If Zionism proceeded from a rejection of all things Jewish in favor of European culture, then its pedagogical mission was to transform all Jews into that model. To justify its colonization efforts of Palestine to a gentile European world, Zionism would present Jews as carriers of European civilization to a land burdened by a barbaric, "parasitical" population who neglected it and transformed it into a desert. Much of what anti-Semitism projected onto European Jews would now be displaced onto Palestinian Arabs, who were seen to embody the attributes that both Zionism and anti-Semitism insisted had been previously embodied by diaspora Jewry. The question of Palestinian "neglect" of the land of Palestine on which they were living "parasitically" is hardly foreign to the anti-Semitic notion that described European Jews as unproductive usurers living "parasitically" off European Christian society.

Even when the parallels between anti-Semitic and Zionist practices would correspond fully to each other, Zionism and Israel showed, and still show, no embarrassment. If anything, as the following will demonstrate, Israeli Jewish soldiers today are willing disciples of anti-Semites. This is not a new development, but harks back to the primal scene of Jewish Zionism's marriage to anti-Semitism. This is clearest in the thought of Herzl, who wrote in his diaries in 1895 that anti-Semitism was "more than understandable," and that it was "salutary" and "useful to the Jewish character." He went further to explain that anti-Semitism constituted an "education of a group by the masses." He would predict that with "hard knocks," "a Darwinian mimicry will set in."[58] Herzl later went to foster alliances with the anti-Semites of his day. His rationale would persist to the present. Israeli soldiers, engaged in putting down the second Palestinian uprising against Israeli military occupation, found pedagogical inspiration in an anti-Semitic

precedent. According to the Israeli newspaper *Ha'Aretz*:

> In order to prepare properly for the next campaign, one of the Israeli officers in the territories said not long ago, "it's justified and in fact essential to learn from every possible source. If the mission will be to seize a densely populated refugee camp, or take over the casbah in Nablus, and if the commander's obligation is to try to execute the mission without casualties on either side, then he must first analyze and internalize the lessons of earlier battles—even, however shocking it may sound, even how the German army fought in the Warsaw ghetto." The officer indeed succeeded in shocking others, not least because he is not alone in taking this approach. Many of his comrades agree that in order to save Israelis now, it is right to make use of knowledge that originated in that terrible war, whose victims were their kin.[59]

The more recent practice of writing numbers on the arms of the thousands of Palestinians that have been crammed into Israeli detention camps since February 2002 further demonstrates that the Nazi precedent acts, not as a deterrent, but rather as a pedagogical model for the Israeli army.[60]

The racism of Zionism clearly derives from a prior anti-Semitism whose object has simply been exchanged. The persistence of the Palestinian Question, therefore, is organically linked to the persistence of the Jewish Question, whose Zionist resolution was accomplished through displacement. Zionism was not entirely convinced that its colonial settler project would be sufficient to transform Jews into Europeans. Its higher objective was that Jews would be normalized only when they have become European anti-Semites, when they began to view diaspora Jewishness through the eyes of anti-Semitism. Examples of this abound. As discussed earlier, in line with Zionism's contempt for the Jewish diaspora, as well as for Jewish victims of the holocaust as passive weaklings, is the popular modern Hebrew term for "sissy": the word "sabon" or soap. The term appeared in the wake of the Second World War when stories circulated about Jews being turned into soap by the Nazis.[61] Even holocaust survivors were seen through the spectacles of anti-Semitism. Ben-Gurion himself spoke of survivors as a "people who would not have survived if they had not been what they were—hard, evil, and selfish people, and what they underwent there served to destroy what good qualities they had left."[62] In this context, Zionism's achievement was precisely this metamorphosis of the Jew into the anti-Semite. The persistence of anti-Semitism within Zionism as a guiding epistemology accounts, then, for much of the persistence of the Palestinian Question.

Nationalism

Zionism is first and foremost a nationalist ideology in the European Romantic tradition, albeit a latecomer to that tradition. The influence of German Romanticism (including philosophers like Herder and Fichte, inter alia), the German youth movement (which Zionism emulated), as well as fin-de-siècle evolutionist thought

and theories of race and degeneration inform much of its ideological makeup. Max Nordau, the theorist of degeneration par excellence, was one of Zionism's philosophical fathers, calling for the regeneration of the degenerated Jews.[63] Nordau was careful to emphasize that "We shall not become Asians there [in Palestine], as far as anthropological and cultural inferiority are concerned, any more than the Anglo-Saxons became Indians in North America, Hottentots in South Africa, or members of the Papua tribes in Australia."[64]

Like all nationalisms, Zionism is founded on a binary of self and other for its identitarian project. What is noteworthy in this regard is how it is the anti-Semite, not the Jew, who constitutes the self for Zionism, with the Jew being the other against whom the new self must be based. In internalizing anti-Semitic subjectivity, Zionism adopts its epistemology lock, stock, and barrel, thus seeing the Jew as everything the new Zionist identity is not. In Zionist lingo, this is translated into a forsaking of the diaspora Jew for the benefit of the new land-based Israeli Jew, who is modeled after the anti-Semite in opposing the very existence of the diaspora Jew. If the anti-Semite seeks the physical expulsion and annihilation of the diaspora Jew, the Israeli Jew is committed to a similar project. The assistance rendered by Zionism to anti-Jewish regimes in expelling their Jews to Israel is now the stuff of history,[65] but equally important is Zionism's commitment to the annihilation of the diaspora Jew ontologically, if not physically. The new Zionist Jew is then ontologically constituted in opposition to all things diasporically Jewish (and that was, for the most part, much of Jewish existence when Zionism emerged), which are viewed through the spectacles of anti-Semitism. By attempting to repress the diaspora Jew within its new subjectivity, Zionism, as Shohat has explained, is always ill at ease and fears the return of the repressed.[66] By externalizing its anxiety onto the Palestinians as the new diaspora Jews, it ensures the continued stability of its new subjectivity by repressing them. Thus, the persistence of Zionism's oppression of the Palestinians is necessary for Zionism's ability to maintain the ontological structure of its new identity, without which, it fears, the diaspora Jew within might return to haunt it. Here we are reminded of the Sartrean formula of the necessity of the Jew for the ontological existence of the anti-Semite.

Zionism is also a colonial movement made possible by a European colonizing world, which Zionism hoped it could both assist and extend. The end of formal colonialism, which culminated in the liberation of Algeria in 1962 and the independence of Portugal's African colonies (including Angola and Mozambique) in 1975, left Israel battling alongside Rhodesia and South Africa as the only remaining settler-colonies in Asia and Africa. Being the last settler-colony since 1994 has not been a reassuring status for Israel. The jingoistic nationalism of Israeli society, its high militarization, and its racially supremacist ideology mask an increasing anxiety about its place in the world.[67] Zionism's transformation of the Jew into the European anti-Semite, however, is the reassuring element in its persistent strategy of garnering continued support.

Israel's packaging itself as an extension of Europe is what accounts for much of the support the settler-colony has received from Europe and America over the

past century. Herzl understood this only too well when he predicted that the anti-Semites would be Zionism's best supporters: "the Governments of all countries scourged by Anti-Semitism will be keenly interested in assisting us to obtain [the] sovereignty we want."[68] Indeed, "not only poor Jews" would contribute to an immigration fund for European Jews, "but also Christians who wanted to get rid of them."[69] Furthermore, "honest Anti-Semites . . . will combine with our officials in controlling the transfer of our estates."[70] His understanding of the role of anti-Semites in Zionist efforts could not be clearer. He unapologetically affirmed: "The anti-Semites will become our most dependable friends, the anti-Semitic countries our allies."[71]

The persistence of anti-Semitism in Euro-American thought today, together with its continued hatred of the figure of the Jew, is precisely what informs European and American support for the anti-Semitic Jews inhabiting Israel. It is hardly a coincidence in this regard that anti-Semitic Christian fundamentalists are Israel's strongest supporters in the United States. Zionism understands this all too well, having based its entire project on this correct assumption and expectation.

The Palestinian people's resistance to the Zionist project and their demand for the end of Israeli racism and colonialism, and for the transformation of Israel into a nonracialist binational state, are registered by Zionism as "anti-Semitic." The irony of an anti-Semitic Zionism depicting the Palestinians as the real anti-Semites is not a simple rhetorical move, but instead is crucial to Zionism's fashioning of Jewish public opinion, both in Israel and on a global scale. If European anti-Semitism, and Zionism with it, targeted the Asiatic Jew of Europe, then Palestinian resistance, dubbed "anti-Semitism" by Zionism, is similarly targeting the Europeanized Jew in Asia. What Palestinian resistance demands is the de-Europeanization of the Jew; it calls for Zionism's abandonment of European anti-Semitism as its inspirational source. What the Palestinians are calling for is the Asianization of Israel's European Jews, with the result that they come to view themselves as not only *in* the Middle East, but *of* it. In doing so, Palestinians are striking at the very heart of the Zionist project, namely the Europeanization of the Jew in an Asian milieu. The insistence of Zionist ideologues on their project is governed by their rejection of the return of the Asiatic in the Jew, which they know would result in loss of European and American support.

Zionism did not struggle for a hundred years to transform the Jew into the anti-Semite and thus become part of Europe, only to be defeated by the "New Jews." Its persistence in oppressing the Palestinians is precisely its persistence in suppressing the Jew within. American and European anti-Semitic commitments to support de-Judaized Jews in Israel lies at the heart of the Palestinian Question. The persistence of the *Palestinian* Question, therefore, *is* the persistence of the *Jewish* Question. Both questions can only be resolved by the negation of anti-Semitism, which still plagues much of Europe and America and which mobilizes Zionism's own hatred of Jewish Jews *and* of the Palestinians.